

THE REVEREND DOMINIC Du RANQUET, S. J.

The oldest priest in Canada, and patriarch of our Indian missionaries, Father Dominic du Ranquet, S. J., died at Wikwemikong, Manitoulin Island, on December 12th, after a marvelous apostleship of fifty-eight years amongst the Ojibways along Lakes Huron and Superior. Father du Ranquet, whose family belonged to the old French nobility, was born at Puy-de-Dome, in France, January 20th, 1813, and had therefore completed nearly eighty-eight years at the time of his death. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1838, and was followed into the Order by four of his brothers, three of whom died in the perilous missions of Madura in India, and one in the United States.

Dominic came to Canada in 1842, and after a few months at Oka, on the Lake of Two Mountains, studying the Indian tongues, he visited the missions of the Upper Ottawa, and then began his long career among the Ojibways along the Lakes. His first fixed mission was on Walpole Island, in Lake Saint Clair, whither he went in 1844. He spent five years there, struggling against bigotry and fanaticism. He was then sent to Manitoulin Island, in Georgian Bay, where Wikwemikong had already become the centre of the Indian missions between Georgian Bay and Lake Nipissing.

During half a century, Father du Ranquet followed the Indians along the rivers and lakes of Ontario, from Nipissing to Fort William and beyond, speaking to them of God, converting them to the Catholic Faith and baptizing them. The old missionary had many hairbreadth escapes from drowning and starvation, in his long, lonely canoe journeys on the shores of Lake Superior in anti-railway times; but God visibly protected him. Many of the facts that are still preserved by the Indians, border on the marvelous: for instance, in one of his canoe